



Sustainability Committee
Monday, March 9, 2020
1:30 PM – 2:30 PM
GVMC

Minutes

1. Welcome and Introductions

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|---------------------------|---------------------|
| a. Rachell Nagorsen | j. Hanna Replinski |
| b. Wendy Ogilvie | k. Kyle Hart |
| c. Rachel Frantz | l. Elaine Isely |
| d. Sophia Bryson | m. Jessie Schulte |
| e. Jamie Vaughan | n. Jerry Miller |
| f. Dennis Cole | o. Carlos Calderon |
| g. Carrie Rivette | p. Courtney Cromley |
| h. Nurya Parish | |
| i. Cliff Walls (on phone) | |

2. RCPP Project Updates

- a. Grant activity
 - i. KCD spoke with county commissioners last week to remind them of the RCPP project and conservation practices. Last year there were 13 property owners, \$1.2 million spent, and 9,000 acres of practices installed on farmland. Still have remaining \$1 million to spend. Two practices are completed, many others are scheduled to begin this year.
 - ii. TU is using the Sensitive Area Mapping Tool by MSU to review areas in Rogue River Watershed to find at-risk properties. A list of about 50 addresses was created for each subwatershed. Direct mailings were sent to these properties. Continuing to do outreach. Jamie will send out sensitive area mapping tool website to group.
 - iii. Matt sent a schedule as well as practice details to Wendy
 1. March 20: application cut off for current funding period
 2. April 22: complete screenings
 3. August 7: contract documents can be signed by applicants
 4. Only one sign up this year, people in the system are the ones who will be processed this month.
 - iv. Fall tillage survey done in Indian Mill, Nash and Ball Creeks. Very high percentage of no till this year, due to wet conditions. About 1% of fields with cover crops. More than a dozen fields have been converted to orchards.
 - v. Plainsong farm workshop in August to promote conservation practices

- vi. Kent Conservation District sale May 2nd, 30% off trees and shrubs for riparian homeowners
 - b. Grand River Revitalization Project Update
 - i. Biological Assessment submitted to USFWS. Biological opinion due back in July. Once done, we can submit permit to get in the river and be in the river in summer 2021.
- 3. Water Trail
 - a. Kent & Ionia County Inventory Report
 - i. WMEAC shared the inventory report which was built on the report that was done in Ottawa County. This report focused on Kent and Ionia Counties including an inventory of access sites. The goal is for LGROW to be able to develop a Lower Grand River Water Trail Development Plan so that we can designate as a state and/or national water trail. Letters of support have been obtained.
 - b. Lower Grand River Water Trail Development Plan
 - i. Cliff provided an update to MGROW's Plan: designated December 2018. Original plan submitted to DNR was draft. It is considered a living document but is no longer in draft mode as of 2020. It has been recommended to wait for the Lower and Upper Grand organizations to complete their portions so that the Grand River can be designated as one full water trail. Draft is currently on Tri County's website. LGROW will use MGROW's as a template.
 - ii. Invasive species information with 'Clean, Drain, Dry' messaging will be important to include at access points.
 - c. Terrain 360 status
 - i. Mapping finished in September, live on their website. Data can be customized still. Only complete for the middle at this time.
 - d. Funding
 - i. Elaine stated that the Michigan State Waterways Commission tasked her with figuring out how to fund water trails, they are interested in their development.
 - ii. MGROW applied for a Consumers' Energy Planet grant to fund wayfinding signs, kiosks, etc.
- 4. Watershed Resiliency
 - a. Sophia is working on a Watershed Resiliency Plan and is hoping to have it mostly done by mid-April. Wendy passed out an outline for group to review. Looking at threats, strengths and opportunities, and actionable items for subwatersheds.
 - b. Each subwatershed will get a map with the current land use and the potential land use that will be more adaptable to a changing climate.
 - c. This plan is going to be very focused on recommendations for climate adaptation, whereas the WMP is focused on non-point source pollution. It also is meant to reinforce the WMP.
 - d. Many communities have done resiliency plans, but not many on a watershed scale. Community resilience plans are being incorporated into this plan.
 - e. There is a table on the back of the outlines passed out, Sophia requested committee members fill this out if they can for their region.

- f. Identifies broad ideas for impacts that may come for specific areas as in agriculture, urban, etc.
- g. Focus on ecological impacts, mentions of cultural, social, and economic threats.
- h. Use of Natural Connections information was used for subwatershed vision maps
- i. Consider use of coldwater stream prediction tool
- j. “Not all green is equal” Jessie pointed out, i.e. a buffer zone of Buckthorn is not a good thing.
- k. Potential partners
 - i. Send to communities for feedback
 - ii. West Michigan Sustainable Business Forum
 - iii. Subwatershed committee
 - iv. Land Conservancy of West Michigan
 - v. Farmland preservation and regenerative agriculture
- 5. Other meetings of Interest
 - a. Kent Conservation District Annual Meeting March 18
 - b. MWEA Watershed Summit March 25
 - c. Save the date: May 8 for LGROW Spring Forum
- 6. 2020 meeting schedule – @ GVMC 1:30 – 2:30 pm
 - a. Skip May meeting and move July meeting to June
 - b. June 15, 2020
 - c. September 14, 2020
 - d. November 16, 2020